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AN EXPLANATION OF The Lord Treasurer's LETTER TO Mr. Montagu, THE KINGS

Late Embassador in *FRANCE*,
March 25th. 1678.

Together with the said Letter:

AND

The Two LETTERS of Mr. *MONTAGU*,
Which were read in the

House of Commons.

[Thomas Osborne]

Printed in the Year, 1679.

XUM

AN EXPLANATION OF The Lord Treasurer's LETTER to Mr. *Montagu.*

I Find so many misconstructions made of the Earl of *Danby*'s Letter to Mr. *Montague*, the King's late Embassadour in *France*, dated the 25th. of *March*, 1678, that I could not but in common Justice, give the World those true Explanations of it, which must needs satisfie the Minds of any, (who have no other than publique designs;) that there could be no ill-meaning to the Nation by that Letter, had it not been written by the King's Command upon the Subject of *Peace* and *Warre*, wherein his Majesty alone is at all times Sole Judge, and ought to be obeyed not only by any of his Ministers of State, but by all his Subjects.

In the first place the Letter shows, That what was sent by the *Earl*, was but a Copy of those Proposals which were consented to on the part of the Confederates, and sent at the same time by Mr. Secretary *Coventry*; so that it appears, the subject matter of the Proposals was not onely known to the Secretaries, but approved by the rest of the Council; and the Letter also shows the reason why full direction was not then given by the Secretary to conclude upon them; because, although his Maiestie at that time, knew by Mr. *Godolphin*, that those were the Propositions upon which the Confederates would make the Peace if they could; yet the formal Powers were not then come from them, which should inable the Embassadour in *France* to perfect the Treaty, if the *French* King should accept it.

At the same time when this intimation was given to His Majestie of the Confederates desiring the Peace upon those Conditions, (and as the only means left to Save *Holland*, and the Interest of the Prince of *Orange* there,) it was also desired of his Majestie, That whilest such formal Powers were preparing to conclude such a Peace, his Majestie would please in their behalf to find by some private means the Humour of the *French* King, Whether it were likely he would accept those Propositions when they should be offered to Him, as believing

believing it might be ſome diſadvantage to the Confederates to propoſe them, if they ſhould be refuſed.

And this was the Motive (at their Requeſt, and at a time, when both *Ghent* and *Ipres* were newly taken, and *Holland* under the utmoſt conſternation) that His Majeſty, to comply with them in a Matter which ſo highly concerned their Safety, did think fit for the Secrecy of it according to their deſires, to have the King of *France* his Mind known privately, and with all the ſpeed poſſible, that He might let the *Confederates* know the *French* King's Intentions, before they expoſed themſelves to a Publique Offer of what might be refuſed.

This is the true meaning of what is ſaid about *feeling* the King of *France's Pulſe*, and making one Anſwer to be ſhowed to the Secretary, and another to the King himſelf, who endeavoured to ſend an account into *Holland* of the *French* King's Anſwer, as privately, and ſpeedily as was poſſible; and unleſs the Peace had been fully compleated, (the advantagious terms whereof would have anſwered for themſelves,) his Majeſty thought it might be ill reſented by the Parliament, who could not preſently know, either the earneſt Requeſt of the Confederates for the Peace, their Neceſſity of obtaining it, their Countries being in a readineſs for a Revolt, nor the goodneſs of thoſe Conditions which were demanded, and which made them unlikely to be granted: as is afterwards expreſſed in the ſaid Letter.

As to that part of the Letter which ſayes, (*In caſe the Conditions of Peace ſhall be accepted, the King expects to have Six Millions of Livres Yearly, for three Years, from the time that this Agreement ſhall be ſigned between His Majeſty and the King of* France; *becauſe it will be two, or three Years before he can hope to find his Parliament in humor to give him Supplies, after the having made any Peace with* France;) it is ſo preſently followed with this Clauſe, (*If you find the Peace will not be accepted, you are not to mention the Money at all*;) And ſo ſoon after that with this farther Clauſe; (*That you believe, this will be the laſt time that you ſhall receive any Propoſitions of a Peace, if theſe be rejected, as you believe they will,*) that it cannot be thought to have any dangerous meaning in it, nor any great hopes of getting the Money: but that it may be the more fully underſtood, you will find by Mr. *Montagu's* Letter of the 18th of *Jan.* $167\frac{7}{8}$, which was read in the Houſe of Commons, (and for which cauſe I have added the ſaid Letter.) viz. (*If the King is for a Warre, you know what to do; if he hearkens to their Money, be pleaſed to let me know what they offer, and I dare anſwer to get our Maſter as much again; for* Barrillon's *Orders are to make the Market as low as he can.*

Now,

Now, as Offers of Money had often been made both by Mr. *Montagu*, and Monſieur *Barrillon*, for a Peace upon *French* Conditions, and Six Millions of Livres had been offered by Monſieur *Barrillon* for one Year; ſo, Mr. *Montagu* having informed the King, that whatever Monſieur *Barrillon* ſhould offer, he could get as much again, his Majeſty was reſolved to try Mr. *Montagu's* power, in caſe the *French* would conſent to the Confederates Conditions; and in addition to Mr. *Montagu's* own Intereſt in moving the *French* King to give the Six Millions for more Years than one, his Majeſty thought it might be a good Motive, without prejudice to the Parliament or Nation, (which would have ſaved their own Money thereby;) to ſay it would be two or three Years before he could hope to find his Parliament in humor to give him Supplies, after having made any Peace with *France*.

The reaſon why nothing was to be ſaid to the *Secretary* concerning the Money, was becauſe Mr. *Montagu* in a former Letter to the King himſelf, had deſired that he would acquaint no body but the Earl of *Danby* with the buſineſs of the Money: ſo that he found that imployment for the Earl, of which he thought fit after to accuſe him.

As I hope I have ſufficiently explained thoſe parts of the Letter, which are liable to miſconſtruction, *viz.* The Reaſons for the Privacy of the Negotiation, for the ſake of the Confederates: The Grounds upon which the Money was expected: The Reaſon why the Earl of *Danby* was imployed in that buſineſs of the Money, and why no mention was to be made of it to the *Secretary*, and the Reaſons why his Majeſty would not have his Parliament to know it until the Conditions had been perfected, (of which his Majeſty would have then been able to have given a very good account) or being broken quite off, never needed to have been known at all.

I ſay, having ſpoke to all thoſe Particulars, I muſt likewiſe crave liberty to obſerve to you thoſe Parts of the ſame Letter, which do ſufficiently ſhow that his Majeſty was not in the leaſt to be drawn from the Intereſt of the Confederates, for any private gain of Money to himſelf.

For you ſee the Embaſſadour had agreed to the Summe, but not for ſo long a time, and no man can imagine why Six Millions of Livres ſhould have been refuſed, if either his Majeſty had had any ill deſign at home, or would have deſerted the Confederates; but on the contrary, you ſee his Majeſty would make no Propoſals, but

what they desired; nor even those, without being prest by them to it: nor would he have any motion of Money to the *French* King, unless he accepted those very Conditions, so desired by the Confederates; and if the Confederates could have obtained such a Peace as they desired, and his Majesty a good Summe of Money towards defraying those Charges he had been at, without taxing of his People; I conceive it ought to have been esteemed good Policy, as it hath been in the former times of *H.* 7th, & *H.* 8th; rather than made a pretence of Treason: but how the not doing any of those things excepted against in that Letter, (and that plainly by reason of the King's great Integrity to the Confederate Interest, which He so evidently prefer'd before His own Personal Advantage) should become Treason, is beyond my comprehension.

I hear, it is made a great aggravation of this Letter, that it is dated five dayes after an Act past to raise Money for an Actual Warre with *France*: But surely every man knowes, That an Act to raise Money for a Warre, is no Declaration of the Warre.

That his Majesty hath alwayes the Sole Power of Peace and War in his own hands.

That His Ministers were never recalled from Treating the Peace at *Nimiguen*; and besides, our then ill prepared Condition for a War, that of the Confederates was then so low, that it was not above a Week after, that the *French* Propositions were made at *Nimiguen*, upon which the Peace was concluded, and after which Propositions (although far worse ones, than what had been Offered by his Majesty but ten dayes before) the *Dutch* would never think of supporting the Warre any longer; and so far was his Majesty from agreeing to that Peace which was then made, that his Majestie's Ministers at *Nimiguen* did not only refuse to sign it; but his Majesty used all possible means to engage the *Dutch* with Him in the Offensive Treaty against *France*; and though He could not procure them to do so, He sent an Army so soon as it was in readiness, to March to their assistance, and thereby, had it been possible, he endeavoured to have encouraged them to continue the Warre.

Though a great deal more is to be said upon this Subject, I think this enough to convince any man, that as this Letter did no harm, nor hindred one step of the Preparations for Warre against *France*; so that it intended nothing of ill either to the Kingdom, or the Cause of the Confederates, and therefore the writer of it can deserve no blame from this Letter, if it had not been written by the King's Command and Direction.

As

As I have wondred much at thoſe ſtrained conſtructions I have found upon this Letter, ſo I confeſs I have not been able to give my ſelf a reaſon how this Letter ſhould only find the hard fate of being loaded with ſuch Crimes, and yet nothing ſaid to thoſe Letters of Mr. *Montagu's*, the Originals of which were alſo read in the Houſe of Commons, which do ſo manifeſtly give his Majeſty the invitations to expect great Sums from *France*, if he would endeavour it; and which does acknowledg this Earl to be ſo great an Enemy to *France* above all other men; That it was grown a Maxim to the States-men there, by one who very well underſtood the ſtate of this Kingdom, *That they muſt deſtroy his Credit with our King, before they could hope to do any good in* England. And I pray God it be not found too true.

The Lord Treaſurer's Letter to Mr. Montagu, *the King's late Embaſſadour in* France, *March* 25th. 1678.

My Lord,

SInce my Writing to you by Mr. *Brisbon*, the Reſolves have been altered as to the ſending you Inſtructions (as yet) for the propoſing any thing to the *French* King; for the Particulars which will be conſented to on the part of the Confederates, (and of which this is a Copy) will be communicated to you by Mr. Secretary *Coventry*, but you will have no other direction from him about them, but onely thereby to be enabled to find the Pulſe of the King, or his Miniſters, at leaſt againſt the time that you ſhall receive Orders to make the Propoſals to him. That you may know from whence the nicety of that affair proceeds, it is neceſſary to inform you, that for fear of its being ill reſented by the Parliament here, the King will not make any propoſal at all of Peace, unleſs he ſhall be preſt to it by the Confederates: And altho by Mr. *Godolphin* he is ſufficiently informed that they deſire a Peace upon the Articles ſent you by the Secretary, yet not having received that deſire formally, the Council will not Adviſe his Majeſty to let his Embaſſador propoſe that which he is not formally impowred to make good; and ſo by ſtaying for that formal Power which by Letter his Majeſty is ſufficiently inabled to propoſe, the time will be loſt for effecting the Peace, if at all it can be had. To ſupply this defect then, and to prevent the King's ſending again into *Holland*

land before he know the mind of *France*, I am commanded by His Majeſtie, to let you know, That you are to make the Propoſitions incloſed to the King of *France*, and to tell him, The King will undertake for the ſeeing them made good on the part of *Spain*, and *Holland*, in caſe they ſhall be accepted by him. And in your anſwers you muſt write the ſame things to the Secretaries by way only of having felt the King of *France's* Pulſe, which you muſt do to the King as a full anſwer from the King of *France*, and ſuch an one as his Majeſtie may depend upon whatever that ſhall be. For the more dextrous management of this Affair, the King is adviſed to ſhow theſe Propoſitions to Monſieur *Barrillon*, but not to give him a Copy; ſo that by the ſtrength of his Memory it is expected he ſhall write to his Maſter, and by that means only are we to hope for an anſwer to a matter of this vaſt Importance. And conſequently you may imagine what a ſatisfaction we are like to reap from it when it comes. I doubt not but by your Conduct it will be brought to a ſpeedy Iſſue; which is of as great Importance as the thing it ſelf, there being no condition worſe for his Majeſtie, then this ſtanding unreſolved betwixt Peace and Warre. I find by Monſieur *Barrillon*, that it is like ſome Places which are dependances upon greater Towns, may be demanded by the King of *France*; but if he intend a Peace, (which you will do very well to know his mind fully in) you may juſtly ſay, That you hope he will neither ſtand upon one ſingle Place, tho a fortified one, nor upon any Place unfortified, which is a dependant upon thoſe which are to be reſtored to *Spain*. And if any thing ſhall be moved about *Sicily* to remain in the *French* hands till the Peace of *Sweden* be concluded, you are onely to ſay, That you are not impowred to ſay any thing upon it: and you are confident the King hath done all he could to get the utmoſt Conditions that would be conſented to: Onely you are to ſay, The King hath again ſent about *Conde*, not being well ſatisfied that they have not left in his Power to give or refuſe as he ſhould have found it convenient, and hopeth ſtill for ſome good anſwer. In caſe the Conditions of Peace ſhall be accepted, the King expects to have Six Millions of Livres yearly for three years, from the time that this agreement ſhall be ſigned between his Majeſtie and the King of *France*: becauſe it will be two or three years before he can hope to find his Parliament in humour to give him Supplies, after the having made any Peace with *France*. The Embaſſador here hath agreed to the Summe, but not for ſo long a time; but if you find the Peace will not be accepted, you are not to mention the Money at all, and all care muſt be taken to have this whole Negotiation

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as private as poſſible, for fear of giving offence at home, where for the moſt part we hear in ten dayes after any thing that is communicated to the *French* Miniſters. I muſt again repeat to you, That whatſoever you write on this Subject to the Secretary, to whom you muſt not mention one ſyllable of the Money, you muſt ſay onely as a thing you believe they will conſent to, if you had power formally to make theſe demands. Pray inform your ſelf of the bottom of what is to be expected from *France*, and aſſure them, That you believe this will be the laſt time that you ſhall receive any Propoſitions of a Peace if theſe be ſlighted, as indeed I believe they will: ſo that you may take your own meaſures as well as the King's upon it. I am

Your Excellencie's moſt Faithful
and obedient Servant,

Danby.

Mr. MONTAGU's *Letter to the* LORD TREASURER, *Dated* Paris, *Jan.* 11th. $167\frac{7}{8}$.

My Lord,

I Have not had the honour of any from your Lordſhip, in anſwer to all thoſe, wherein I gave you the beſt account I could of matters here, by the Expreſs I ſent. Nor indeed could I expect his Majeſtie could take any ſuddain reſolution in matters of ſo great moment.

The occaſion of my giving you this trouble, is, to give you the beſt light I can into the reaſon of Mr. *de Rouvigny*'s Son's Journey into *England*, who will be there perhaps as ſoon as this Letter. If his Father's Age would have permitted it, I believe they would have ſent him; ſo they have choſen the Son, who is to make uſe of Lights his Father will give him, and by the near Relation he hath to my Lady *Vaughan*, who is his Couſin-German, and the particular Friendſhip which Father and Son have with Mr. *William Ruſſell*, he is to be introduced into a great commerce with the Malecontented Members of Parliament, and inſinuate what they ſhall think fit to croſs your Meaſures at Court, if they ſhall prove diſagreeable here; whileſt Monſieur *Barrillon* goes on in his ſmooth civil way.

I thought it my duty to his Majeſtie to give your Lordſhip this account, tho I have not explained this matter ſo much in my Letter to the Secretary; wherefore I hope you will let this be ſeen by none but his Majeſtie. What I know farther of this, or any thing elſe, you ſhall always be acquainted with. They are here in great pain, till it will be known what will become of the Parliament, and do not ſtick to ſay, If that be put off for a Month, they doubt not of a Peace. I am with all reſpect,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhips

Moſt obedient and humble

Servant,

R. Mountagu.

Another of Mr. MONTAGU'S *Letters to the* Lord Treaſurer. *Dated* Paris, *Jan.* 18th. 167⅞.

My Lord,

SInce I ſealed up my Letter, by my Lord *Dumblane*, I have had one with me who is very exactly, as can be, informed of moſt things here, and hath told me the reaſon of *Rouvigny*'s Journey.

His chief Errand is, to let the King know, That the King of *France* did hope he was ſo firm to him, as not to be led away by the *Grand Treaſurer*; who was an Ambitious Man, and, to keep himſelf well with the People, would gratifie their inclinations, by leading his Maſter unto an unreaſonable Warre againſt *France*. That as for Money, if he wanted it, he ſhould have what he would from hence.

His Inſtructions are, if this does not take, by the means of *Will. Ruſſell*, and other diſcontented people, to give a great deal of Money, and croſs all your Meaſures at Court.

When he gives you his Father's Letter of Recommendation, you cannot chuſe but be very kind to him, ſince the chief part of his Journey is to do you ſo good Offices. My Lord, if I might be worthy

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to give my advice, who ſee things upon the place, There could be nothing better done, than after he hath been two dayes in *England*, for the King to give the Order to tell Monſieur *Barrillon*, That he knowes *Rouvigny* hath a Relation, and Commerce with people ill-affected to the Government; and would be therefore glad to have him retire. You cannot imagin how it would damp them here, when they ſhall ſee their little tricks do not paſs upon us.

And Old *Rouvigny*, that values himſelf upon knowing *England*, and having ſaved ſo much Money as he had (by what I told you formerly) order to give, hath given it them for a Maxim, *That they muſt diminiſh your Credit, before they can do any good in* England. But ſince their chief Quarrel to you, is the being ſo true to your Maſter's Intereſt, I am ſure he is too juſt to let them do you any hurt.

If the King is for a Warre, you know what to do; if he hearkens to their Money, be pleaſed to let me know what they offer, and I dare anſwer, to get our Maſter as much again: for Barrillon's *Orders are to make the Market as low as he can.* I am, &c.

R. Mountagu.

FINIS.